



For Immediate Release 11/14/2016; 1:45 p.m.

Contact: Fire Information Center, 828-513-2500 or 336-455-9641

Email: partyrockfireinfo@gmail.com

Party Rock Fire Continues to Advance

The Party Rock Fire is now 3,457 acres in size and containment is 15 percent. Recent calm weather has helped reduce the fire's spread somewhat, though smoke continued to impact the area. The weather over the next few days will be mostly warmer and drier with light winds. These conditions, along with the ongoing drought and leaf fall, are likely to support more active fire behavior and spread. The Party Rock Fire continues to advance west of Round Top Mountain, adjacent to and west of Chimney Rock Village and to areas on the north side of the fire. These unusual weather conditions are resulting in the fire burning throughout the day and night. This differs from seasonal fires that burn mostly during warmer afternoon periods, and just smolder at night. This makes the fire more resistant to control.

Firefighters are successfully defending homes and structures as the fire creeps downhill into areas with properties at risk. Engines are staged at each home and hose lays are deployed and used to put out the fire as it nears property. This suppression strategy is used to completely combust all available fuel so reburn potential is minimized. These structure protection tactics will continue as long as necessary. No structures have been lost to date.

About 1,000 people continue to be affected by evacuations. Fire officials meet regularly with local emergency management services to review when people may be allowed back in and to assess if additional evacuation notices may be needed. There were no changes in the status of evacuations over the past 24 hours. A new evacuation shelter opened today at Grace Lutheran Church, 1245 6th Avenue West in Hendersonville; the shelter contact number is 828-693-4890. The Bat Cave shelter closed due to poor air quality. The Greenhill Baptist Church shelter has also closed.

For public and firefighter safety, travelers are encouraged to adjust speed for reduced visibility and firefighting equipment on the roads. Area residents with respiratory ailments or sensitivities should keep their doors and windows closed and operate their HVAC system to avoid breathing smoke-filled air. Air Quality alerts can be obtained from the NWS at <http://www.weather.gov/gsp/>.

A stretch of Highway 74-A leading into Chimney Rock Village from the north and south remains closed. Road information can be accessed on the NCDOT Travel Information Management System website at <https://tims.ncdot.gov/tims/regionsummary.aspx>.

Party Rock Fire information can be found on INCIWEB (<http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/>) or on the Town of Lake Lure website (<http://www.townoflakelure.com/>).

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